Enter FLAVIUS.

*FLAV** O you gods!
Is yon despis'd and ruinous man my lord ? Fall of decay and failing *? O* monument And wonder of good deeds evilly bestow'd ! What an alteration of honour has Desperate want made [8]!
What viler thing upon the earth, than friends, Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends! How rarely [9] does it meet with this time's guise, When man was wish'd to love his enemies*: Grant, I may ever love, and rather woo Those that would mischief me, than those that do[2]!

The second Thief has just said, he'll give over his trade. It is time enough for that, says the first Thief: let us wait till Athens is at peace. There is no hour of a man's life so wretched, but he always has it in his power to become a *true, I.* e. an honest man. I have explained this easy passage, because it has, I think, been misunderstood. MALONE.

[8] What an alteration of honour has
Desperate want made!] *An alteration of honour,* is an *alteration* of an *honourable state* to a state of disgrace. JOHNSON.

9 How RARELY does it meet —] *Rarely fovjitly ;* not for *sel~dom.* WARBURTON.

How curiously; how happily. MA.LONE.

[1] When man was WISH'D to love his enemies:] We should read—will'd. He forgets his Pagan system here again. WARBURTON.

Wish'd is right. It means *recommended.* See vol. vi. p. 388, n. 6 ; and vol. vii. p. 72, n. 6. REED.

[1] Grant, I may ever love, and rather woo
Those that would mischief me, than those that DO !] It is, plain, that in this whole speech *friends* and *enemies* are taken only for those who *profess friendship^* and *profess enmity ?* for the *friend* is supposed not to be more kind, but more dangerous than the *enemy.* The sense is, " Let me rather woo or caress those that *would* mischief, that *profess to mean me mischief,* than those *that really do me* mischief, under false professions of kindness.'* The Spaniards, I think, have this proverb: " Defend me from my friends, and from my enemies I will defend myself.'* This proverb is a sufficient comment on the passage. JOHNSON.